

CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY
16 October 1973

INTELLIGENCE MEMORANDUM

State Dept review
completed

MIDDLE EAST

Situation Report Number 43
(as of 1130 EDT)

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C02826101

THE MILITARY SITUATION

GENERAL

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SYRIAN FRONT

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4. According to Tel Aviv, a combined Syrian/Iraqi force attacked Israeli positions at dawn, but was repulsed. The Israeli counterattack between Sasa and Al Harrah is pointed toward the Dara-Damascus road and Israeli forces may be within five miles of it. There have been no reports of heavy fighting in the northern or southern sectors of the Syrian front so far today.

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SADAT SPEECH

13. President Sadat addressed a joint session of the People's Assembly and the Arab Socialist Union central committee today, adopting a tone of considerable confidence and--with the notable exception of an inflammatory reference to Egyptian missile poised to strike Israel--of some restraint.

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15. Sadat made his reference to the missile in a relatively conciliatory context, noting that Egypt was ready with the missile if necessary, but that its desire was not to annihilate Israel but only to liberate the land occupied in 1967.

16. In this same vein, Sadat laid out a tough peace position which allowed for some flexibility, particularly on the Palestinian question. In discussing Egypt's terms, Sadat again made it clear that his aim is to restrain rather than destroy Israel. Sadat's proposal, which he addressed as an open message to President Nixon, is that Egypt will accept a ceasefire when Israel has agreed to a withdrawal to the 1967 borders; that upon completion of the withdrawal it will enter into a UN-sponsored international press conference, the merits of which Sadat said he would do his utmost to impress upon the Palestinians; and that Egypt is "ready at this hour" to begin clearing the Suez Canal.

17. Sadat's position on Israeli withdrawal appears to be uncompromising, but his willingness to enter an international conference to secure a peace settlement and his repeated statements that he does not want to annihilate Israel suggest that he is willing to go some distance to accommodate Israel's security needs. Furthermore, he makes it clear that he regards the 1967 border question as separate from the issue of the territory of Israel proper, which the Palestinians

claim as their own. He calls only for some recognition of Palestinian rights in a context in which he clearly does not mean recognition of Palestinian territory, a position which seriously undercuts the fedayeen stand and which Sadat has for some time expounded.

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KOSYGIN ON WAY TO CAIRO?

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SOVIET NAVAL ACTIVITY

23. TASS has announced that a cruiser and destroyer have begun a visit to the Italian port of Taranto today and will also visit Messina. The visit has been scheduled for several months. The Soviet ships involved had entered the Mediterranean last week.

SOVIET MEDIA ON US AID TO ISRAEL

24. Moscow is continuing to issue reports on US military support for Israel but is treating them

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in relatively moderate fashion. TASS today issued a round-up of US originated reports on arms deliveries indicating that tanks and aircraft were being sent to Israel. A Soviet domestic radiobroadcast today repeated a French press report that 300 cargo planes have transitted the Azores for the Middle East. Moscow has made no mention of US statements that the resupply effort is in response to similar Soviet activity.

ARAB REACTION TO US RESUPPLY EFFORT

25. Arab reaction, official and press, has in general been bitter but somewhat restrained. Presidents Sadat and Asad both gave speeches this morning which touched only lightly on the US airlift and emphasized their confidence that the resupply effort will have little effect on the Arabs' determination to pursue the battle. Most authoritative press commentary has adopted a similar line. Cairo press and radio editorialists, for instance, have taken the position that the need for shipments of arms to Israel proves the Arab contention that the Israelis are militarily in trouble. Some bitterness emerged in a Cairo radiobroadcast which noted that "the US position means that US policy wishes Israel to occupy the Sinai desert (and)...shares with Zionism its ambitions in the Syrian heights." But the same commentary emphasizes that "God has willed something else" and that the Arabs will continue on to victory despite the US.

26. Much of the press treatment in the Arab world gives heavier coverage to President Nixon's press conference reference to US policy in the Lebanon crisis of 1958 than it does to the airlift to Israel. Although some papers have bannered what they call the "Great American Betrayal" and all have indicated some apprehension that the US intends direct military intervention in the conflict, many have expressed the hope that the US intention is only to intimidate the Arabs

The Cairo newspaper Al-Ahram states its belief that the US has actually placed itself in an embarrassing position; the US would not, the paper theorizes, put its troops into combat in Arab lands, but would act militarily only to protect Israel proper, thus implicitly recognizing the validity of the pre-1967 border

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The US Interests Section in Cairo has been restricted in its access to Egyptian government officials, probably as a result of the US airlift, but this apparently involves only a new Egyptian requirement that Interests Section officials be accompanied in their meetings with the Egyptians by representatives of the Spanish Embassy, which officially represents US interests in Egypt. Egyptian Foreign Ministry officials have emphasized that this restraint will not affect the status of private Americans in Egypt, and the restriction may be eased in situations requiring urgent handling, such as the evacuation of American citizens.

Malaysian Student Demonstrations

About 1,000 Malaysian students supporting the Arab cause in the Mideast gathered at the office building in Kuala Lumpur housing the US embassy on

16 October. The demonstration, the third since Friday, resulted in the burning of a US flag and the breaking of two windows at the nearby USIS library.

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